A SHORT ANSWER TO A SHORT PAPER,

INTITULED,

A Few Brief and Modeſt Reflections, perſwading a Juſt Indulgence to be granted to the Epiſcopal Clergy and People in *Scotland.*

JOHN x. 1.

Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, he that entreth not by the Door into the Sheep-fold, but climbeth up ſome other way, the ſame is a Thief and a Robber.

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29 *May*, M. DCC. III.

A SHORT
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A New Bill and Modest Reflections, Proving a Just Indulgence to be granted to the Episcopal Clergy and People in England.

Mr Robert Nelson
Author of the Letter

A Short Answer to a Short Paper, &c.

IT is plain the Writer was in Haste, tho he had not told us so, and in more Haste than good Speed: For,

1. He forgets that Presbyterian Government is established by Law; and that the Presbyterian Kirk is as National in *Scotland*, as the Prelatical Church is in *England*; and as Essential to our true Civil Constitution: A Truth, evident from our first Reformation, and which hath been set in the cleerest Light by the late happy Revolution, and the good Laws following thereupon: Yet, this Author treats the Presbyterians no otherwise than as *a Party*, *pag.* 5. who ought to be very well content with and thankful for an Indulgence or Toleration to *their own tender Consciences*, *pag.* 6. and that at the Discretion of their Ingrain'd Sworn Enemies; and tells us, That *this present Parliament are chosen under a Ministry very favourable to Presbytry*, *pag.* 4. as if it derogated from the Ministry and Government to favour the legal Establishment. Is not all this very proper to render the Prelatical Party very Uppish? To set them, at least, upon a Level with the Legal Church? And swell them with Hopes of Contending for and Gaining the Mastery? Especially, if they should fancy, that such *modest Reflections* spring from the Brain of a Statesman, their powerful Patron; And is this the way to National Peace, Unity and Strength? Or is it good Service to the Government?

2. The Question is also stated in great Haste, for no Law forbids, and no Body hinders, to those of the Episcopal Perswasion, *the quiet Exercise of GOD's Worship* in their Houses: But is their Intruding upon planted Congregations, their making an Ostentive Parade with publick Collections on the Streets, and other affected Formalities, as they attempted to do at *Glasgow* against Law, their Encroachments at *Haddingtoun*, and many Insolencies elsewhere, are these *the quiet Exercise of Worship?* What will they not presume upon, if they have the least shadow of Law, or Countenance of Great Men? Or is it a *Just Indulgence*, under that modest Name, to grant them a full *Comprehension* also.

The annexed *Provisions* are Concessions of Wondrous Grace. 1. *The Presbyterian Government shall continue*, to wit, till the Indulged and their Patrons become able to o'return it. 2. They are not to be *thrust upon*

General

General Assemblies, &c. for which the Church owes Thanks. 3. The Indulged *shall preach only to such as willingly come to hear them.* 'Tis pity our Author gave not this Caution more early, to have prevented the Zeal and Keenness of some Masters, who, upon the Encouragements given them of late, did, by Threatnings, and other ways of Violence, compel their Tennents to leave the Church, and go to Episcopal Meetings; whereof several Complaints are before the Commission, that yet want Redress, as well as many other Grievances. 4. *Presbyterian Ministers shall have Right to the Legal Stipend*, another of our Authors Grants of Grace. 5. The Qualification of the *Tolerated* is large enough, *viz. That they own some Protestant Confession or other:* No matter which; provided it be not the *Westminster* Confession received by the Church of *Scotland*, and ratified by the Parliament 1690, after the Revolution. Any Test of Orthodoxy is sufficient, especially either that which brings us back to the Infancy of our Reformation, and, in so far, nearer to old Popery, as the Confession recorded in our ancient Acts of Parliament, (tho otherwise a good one for these times,) or that which conforms us, and consequently tends to subject us, to *England*: For *Belgia*, and *Geneve*, little known, and never pretended to in *Scotland*, are but drawn in for Company to bear off the other two. And how many gross Errors have lurkt under a claim to these Confessions? But if a Minister call himself Protestant, according to their manner of owning Confessions, he may be *Papist*, *Socinian*, *Deist*, or what he will, he must be tolerated. And as for Loyalty, it seems that is not fit to be mentioned now, nor is it worth while to propose a Test for it, when the happy day begins to dawn of being rewarded for stedfast Loyalty to *the young Darling of Heaven*, the most recommending Quality of the Clergy, yea and of the Laity too, to be tolerated.

It is Impudence to deny, says the short Paper, *That, at least, the half of* Scotland *do desire a Toleration.* And it is Impudence to assert, after all the Pains taken by divers Artifices and Motives, that the tenth part of *Scotland* doth desire it; or that any one wise & good Man in our present Circumstances, can be fond of it: Since it is so manifest, as things are now stated, that it can be design'd for nothing but Mischief and Confusion. Was not King *William* told by Persons that were no Presbyterians themselves, That there were not Five Hundred Persons of Episcopal Perswasion in *Scotland*; Yet their Growth is already prodigious to the half of *Scotland*: But we know whose Converts they are, and by what means.

Those

The late Mobb in *Glasgow* is a strange Proof, *That* Dundee, Aberdeen *and* Elgin, *and the Shire of* Fife, *are among the places where Presbytry is best established, and Episcopacy most hated.* Somewhat of Kin to this Argument is another Insinuation, That many *in the North of* Scotland *are not inclin'd to Presbytry*, therefore they desire a Toleration. But *esto* it were so, will this conclude a Toleration either due or adviseable for them? What if they be indifferent, and ready enough to comply with the National Worship? Is it not the Interest of the Nation and Civil Government, that they should do so?

As for his Computations, we meddle not with them in this short Answer further than to affirm, that they are false; leaving them to others, who have Skill to examine his Political Arithmetick. But the base Practices for procuring shamm Subscriptions in *Fife*, and elsewhere, are ready to be exposed. And the worthy Gentlemen, who represent the Shires enumerated by this Author, know best what Return the Account he gives of them deserves.

But the next Argument is admirable, *A Third or Fourth part of* Scotland *may be Dissatisfied for want of Toleration*; Now *Dissatisfaction* is the cause of *Disaffection*: Therefore, let the Government look to it self, and to prevent their danger from the *Disaffected* grant a Toleration *to please* the *Dissatisfied*. But I trow the Argument would run both more true and strong for some Mens purposes, thus. *Disaffection* is the great cause of *Dissatisfaction*, and therefore the *Disaffected* must be Encouraged with a Toleration to put them in better plight for disseminating their *Disaffection*, and for *offering an opportunity* to our Generous Friends abroad to lend back the *Righteous Heir*, that the World may once more be our own, and we may be avenged on our *common enemies* the Presbiterians, by turning their Country (as the Court Fates decreed some Score of Years ago) into a *Hunting Field*, and all this for the service of our *Religion, Queen and Nation.*

If any shall say, *Toleration will dissatisfie the Presbyterians.* 'Tis but a Wiseless Objection: For nothing at this Juncture can be more to our Mind. Sent we not the *Surplice and Lessons of the day* to *Glasgow* of purpose to raise the Rabble? And spread in *Nithsdale* that Toleration was granted and Patronages restored to rouze the Mad-cap Mountaineers with their Testimonies? And we have more Tricks in store for them, when we *can have the good happ of more leasure.* In the mean while. *We* are the *National Church*, and the Presbyterians but a *Party* or *Faction*. We have the Right to be *Dissatisfied and Disaffected* too, and must be *Allayed*,

yea,

yea, *pleaſed*; they have none, like the Noble Hero *Drawcanſir* in the Rehearſal.

We Swagger, Huff and Swear, look big and ſtare:
And all this we dare do, becauſe we dare.

But for the Presbyterians, out of the plenitude of our Clemency, we condeſcend to aſſure them, that we ſhall cramm no Opinions down their Throats for the preſent; Let them enjoy their Benefices and exerciſe their Diſcipline over their own Herd, *Durante beneplacito noſtro*, and let them be thankful and ceaſe to murmur.

This O&roy and gracious grant ſhould oblige them, *not to hinder us from Worſhipping God, nor force us to deny our Judgements* (for alas! Force wou'd e'en *Neceſſitate* us to it) nor oblige us *to ſuppreſs our Opinions in Articles not fundamental*; and not *to exerce a deſpotic Antichriſtian power over our Conſciences and Liberties.* And to all this the Presbyterians ſay, *Fiat ut Petitur*; for what do the Prelatiſts want of a juſt Liberty, or who impoſes upon them. Nay, ſays our Author, the Presbyterians, whoſe *Tender Conſciences* ought to be *ſatisfied with their own Immunity in the exerciſe of their Religion* (for we hope this ſhall turn again to be the Stile in Faſhion) *ought not to have Liberty to force others to be of their Opinion, or puniſh them, if they be not, with the Cenſure of being depriv'd of the publick exerciſe of Divine Worſhip.* Is not this the language of a Raving head? Who forces Opinions or who puniſhes for them? And a grievous *Puniſhment* and *Cenſure* it is, to tell an Epiſcopal Miniſter, you muſt come in by the Door of Eccleſiaſtical and Legal Aſſumption, and not climb over by the breach of a waſting and intruſive Toleration. Mean while none hinders your exerciſe of Divine Worſhip, as publick as you pleaſe in your Private Houſes; but if by *Publick* you mean to get into Churches or Authorized Independent Meeting Houſes; why, truly you muſt ly under the heavy Cenſure of wanting them, as long as we and the Wiſdom of the Nation can keep you out.

Thus our Author fancies, that he has with great Ingenuity, *laid the State of the Caſe in a plain view*; his wiſer Arguments are in reſerve till he *have the good happ of Three or Four Hours time to Write*; for you ſee he is a Man of buſineſs. This is only a Taſte to whet the Readers Appetite, and prepare his Digeſtion for more: And I ſhall only adviſe him to Gild or Sugar his Reaſonings better, elſe they can never go down with reaſonable

able Men. And as for the Toleration it ſelf, let him and his Companions mould it into what ſhape they will; we are perſwaded, that after Yeſterdays worthy Reſolve for ſecuring our Religion and Liberty, none ſhall adventure to preſent to a *Scots* Proteſtant Revolution Parliament, any ſuch Motion (which would undermind the foundations of Religion and Liberty, and render both unſecure) without being rejected with the higheſt diſdain. But if our Author deſign not his *juſt Indulgence and Toleration* to ſerve ſome other ends then thoſe of peace, and if he be a Man of Influence, as well as of Buſineſs, let him imploy it, for obtaining a *juſt Maintenance* to the Epiſcopal Miniſters, and then all will be in quiet.

In the mean time, we have the Example of *Dutch* and *Engliſh* Tolerations ſet before us, the vaſt Diſparity of which is ſufficiently evinced by other Prints that are already in every ones hands; and as we ſay, that one Man's food is another Man's Poyſon, it is clearly made out, that whatever advantages may be pretended to accrue to *England* and *Holland* (where there are ſo many different Parties and Intereſts) from a Toleration; (tho, by the by, the Sacramentary Teſt, and the late ſtrugle to promote a Conformity-Bill, cramps the inſtance as to *England*) yet it cannot faill to produce the quite contrary effects with us, where there is but one Party and Intereſt labouring by this Engine of a Toleration to overthrow our Revolution Eſtabliſhment, and to turn us back to that Confuſion and Miſery that we have ſo mercifully eſcaped.

That this is not only the Tendency, but the formal deſign of this pleaded for Toleration, doth manifeſtly appear, as by many other obvious evidences, ſo particularly by a Letter from one Mr. *William Abercrombie*, who ſeems to have been early let in into the depths of the Miſtery that hath been working theſe Four or Five Months amongſt us. The Letter is directed to Mr. *Gatherer* one of his Brethren in the North, the Original is ready to be produced, if called for, and the words are theſe.

Edr. 1. *March*, 1703.

Reverend Brother.

TO your laſt Two I returned an Anſwer, with one incloſed therein from the Earl of Murray *to his Baillie, Signifying his pleaſure, That Meeting Houſes be ſet up and Encouraged both at* Alves *and at* Forreſt, *and that is but ſuteable to his deſign of ſetting up one at* Aberdour, *which he will Encourage, with the preſence of himſelf and his whole Family; and by the incloſed * Print you will perceive the Security of ſuch courſes as being recommended to the Protection of the Council by the Queen;*

* The Queens Letter to the Council.

Queen; We are not to Scann the Phrases therein, but to consider the Design, that it is a favour intended to us, and accept of it as such, which time will improve to some higher strain, when the Inclinations of People shew themselves so as it will be found just and necessary to gratifie them. And it will be fit to set the thing on foot in the most important places, either in Cities and Burghs of great resort, or in places where Men of Quality reside, that their Example may Influence others. And the Bishop of Murray *being in the Countrey, let him be Consulted that Ministers step not in at their own hand without his Advice and Concurrance, I mean of such only who step into places where they had no Title formerly; as for those who can return to their own Charges, their Title revives upon this Letter, without the necessity of any other Solemnity from their Superiour: This favour is not the effect of any Address from hence, for the Two Doctors went not off from this till the* 5th. *of* February, *and you see it is Signed on the* 4th. *They arrived at* London *on the* 20th. *but of any Application by them to the Court we know nothing as yet: The Bishop of* Glasgow *is the only Bishop in the Kingdom that has Countenanced or Encouraged their Project, and all they propose to themselves is a beggarly futing of Alms to supply their wants, occasioned by their own fault, to say no worse thing,* Si pranderet olus patienter regibus uti, nollet Aristippus, *is once more verified of our Doctors. We are to have a General Assembly here the Tenth instant, where the Party will shew their proper Genius no doubt, if they be not much changed, and it is hoped they will so open on this Juncture as to give occasion for more favour to others. We have a new Addition of Councellours in place of a few that are expunged, viz. Marques of* Athol, *The Earl of* Glencairn, *The Earl of* Breadalbin, *the Master of* Tarbat, *The Lord* Collington, Carnwath, *the Sheriff of* Boot *and several others.* Melvil, Grant, Meggins *are out of Doors. Much depends upon the good Disposition of Members of the ensuing Parliament, and this favour to the Episcopal Clergy is designed on purpose to provoke all that have kindness for them to contribute their endeavours to advance that Government, in which, the more they shew themselves Active, they will be the more acceptable at Court, this being a discovery of Her Inclinations to warm them thereinto. I have not yet heard from your Brother, but how soon any thing comes to my hands it shall be dispatched with all care, by*

Your Affectionate Brother and Humble Servant,

WILL: ABERCROMIE.

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